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### *The space between: negotiating the contours of nodal security governance through 'Safer Communities' in Bosnia–Herzegovina*

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*Published in:*  
Policing and Society

*DOI:*  
[10.1080/10439463.2013.785547](https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2013.785547)

*Publication date:*  
2014

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Blaustein, J. (2014). The space between: negotiating the contours of nodal security governance through 'Safer Communities' in Bosnia–Herzegovina. *Policing and Society*, 24(1), 44-62.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2013.785547>

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## **The Space Between: Negotiating the Contours of Nodal Security Governance through ‘Safer Communities’ in Bosnia-Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>**

In this article, I analyse three months of ethnographic field work conducted with the United Nations Development Programme’s ‘Safer Communities’ project in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) in 2011 using an analytical framework grounded in Lendvai and Stubbs’ (2007) work on ‘policy translation’. This framework suggests that the spaces which exist between different ‘security nodes’ (Johnston and Shearing 2003) such as ‘Safer Communities’ can be analysed as ‘contact zones’ (Pratt 1991) where different actors and interests converge to shape the contours of security governance in transitional, post-conflict societies. Analysing ‘Safer Communities’ as a ‘contact zone’ provides insight into the power politics of the project and to the important role that capital and nodal proximity play in determining the translational capacities of different stakeholders. My analysis of this case study affirms the significant influence of supranational institutions like the European Commission and their ability to draw upon substantial economic capital to align the outputs of local security nodes from a distance. It also presents a nuanced account of networked security governance in which multi-lateral institutions like UNDP can draw upon their nodal proximity and limited capital to mediate pressures for structural alignment. This latter finding is promising because it highlights a ‘nodal solution’ to the question of ‘how nodal relations could be transformed to improve governance processes and outcomes for weak actors’ (Wood and Shearing 2007: 98) in structurally weak and dependent societies like BiH.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge my doctoral supervisors Andy Aitchison and Alistair Henry and my reviewers for their valuable feedback. I would also like to thank UNDP in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Safer Communities team for their ongoing support and commitment to operational transparency.

Keywords: contact zones, security governance, Bosnia-Herzegovina, policing reform

## Introduction

This article generates a fresh sociological perspective on the relationship between liberal state-building, security governance and policing reforms in transitional, post-conflict societies. This is achieved through an ethnographic case study which examines the United Nations Development Programme's 'Safer Communities' project (SCP) as an important 'contact zone' in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH).<sup>2</sup> This analytical approach builds upon Johnston and Shearing's (2003) work on nodal security governance by positing that contact zones describe important spaces that link security nodes thus constituting a nodal security network and supplying these nodes with meaning. Contact zones denote the convergence of various actors and interests working, either actively or passively, to assert their preferences over the conceptual and programmatic contours of mantras and policies associated with security governance and policing reforms in weak and structurally dependent societies. With reference to recent literature that focuses on structural and post-structural critiques of the problematic relationship between liberal state-building projects and policing reform initiatives (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012; Ellison and Pino 2012; Ryan 2011), I examine the power politics of the 'Safer Communities' project to highlight the potentially coercive and undemocratic influence of non-core development aid structures on policy prescriptions that affect the work of mediatory and localised security nodes. Of particular concern was the tendency for the SCP team to attempt to align the project with locally perceived interests of powerful supranational donors, in this instance the European Commission, rendering this translational process largely inaccessible to domestic policy makers and practitioners.

I conclude this case study with a review of more recent developments in the Safer Communities project that support a more nuanced account of the structural relationship between liberal state-building and security governance in BiH. The fact that the SCP team was ultimately capable of devising a creative solution to their funding dilemma by attempting to recast the project as a component of the UN's 'Armed Conflict and Violence Prevention

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis and the findings represent the views of the author and not the official position of UNDP, the 'Safer Communities' project or its staff. The team's Project Manager was briefed about my goals and intentions prior to the research and a 'Research Protocol' and 'Terms of Reference' were agreed establishing my ownership of any data that I personally generated during the placement and my right to publish my findings. Advance copies of the draft were sent to all members of the 'Safer Communities' team and feedback (positive) was provided by one individual.

Programme' illustrates the capacity of local manifestations of multi-lateral development agencies like UNDP in BiH to function as 'policy translators'. This example therefore demonstrates how seemingly disempowered stakeholders can potentially mitigate the coercive effects of powerful structural pressures for alignment pursue a capacity building mandate that 'improve[s] governance processes and outcomes for weak actors' (Wood and Shearing 2007: 98).

### **The space between: contact zones in nodal models of governance**

Johnston and Shearing (2003) propose that nodal governance provides an important conceptual framework for accounting for the interplay of different actors, institutions and collectives in governing security. They argue that the combined effects of neo-liberalisation and globalisation have effectively created plural policing landscapes in many societies as the responsibility for the governance of security has effectively become 'embedded' within all aspects of governance resulting in a diverse network of interconnected security nodes (Ibid.: 26) While states continue to play a 'predominant' role in steering these networks domestically, Johnston and Shearing add that in practice governance is often 'negotiated' (Ibid.: 27) so the 'nodal cartography' of security governance in post-modern societies has become increasingly responsive to private interests. Accordingly, they argue that the 'governance of security is increasingly oriented around risk, anticipation and prevention' and therefore serves to generate 'power inequalities' as opposed to 'just and democratic outcomes' which reflect the public interest in security (Ibid.: 160). Applying this framework to elaborate on the sociological relationship between liberal state-building, security governance and policing reform processes in a transitional post-conflict society like Bosnia-Herzegovina is therefore desirable given the plethora of transnational actors and institutions involved with the policing reform process, the limited role of the state in 'steering' these reforms' and the extent to which a plurality of governing actors emulate the nodular character of governance that Johnston and Shearing associate with a post-modern society.

Johnston and Shearing (2003: 22) suggest that the negotiated character of governance is significant because it serves to generate order, that is, 'a set of explicit or implicit normative prescriptions or rules about the way things ought to be'. Thus, mapping the contours of a nodal security network promises to illuminate the power politics of security governance within a given society. In other words, this exercise serves to address the important question of 'who has the capacity and authority to make rules?'

Illuminating the 'nodal cartography' of post-modern security governance requires more than just the study of specific security nodes. Rather, Johnston and Shearing suggest that it must focus on the networked relations between these nodes in order to determine what compels them to govern security in certain ways and to what effect (Ibid.:146-147). I argue that the concepts of 'policy translation' (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007) and 'contact zones' (Pratt 1991) provide important frameworks for analysing the power politics which define the spaces between different security nodes.

The conceptual development of policy translation is attributable to Lendvai and Stubbs (2007) who draw upon actor-network-theory or the 'sociology of translation' to address a deficiency in the mainstream literature on policy transfer: a linear and deterministic view of the policymaking process. Drawing on Latour (2005: 39), the conceptual distinction between 'policy transfer' and 'policy translation' is apparent in the roles of 'mediator' and 'intermediary'. Whereas an intermediary 'transports meaning or force without transformation', '[m]ediators transform, translate, distort and modify the meaning or the elements that they are supposed to carry' with the effect that '[t]heir input is never a good predictor of their output' (Latour 2005: 39). Mediators represent active participants in a process of transformation while intermediaries merely serve to transmit policies between contexts. Translation therefore implies that '...a series of interesting, and sometimes even surprising disturbances can occur in the spaces between the 'creation', the 'transmission' and the 'interpretation' or 'reception' of policy meanings' (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007).

Borrowing from Pratt (1991), Lendvai and Stubbs (2007: 6) describe these spaces as 'contact zones'. According to Pratt (1991: 6), 'contact zones' describe '...the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historic disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect' (*quoted in* Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 15). These contact zones are important social sites where different actors interact and compete to shape policy meaning and content in relation to their individual and institutional preferences (Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 16). Contact zones are actively constructed 'through actor networks' and therefore, they do not represent 'pre-existing categories' (Lendvai and Stubbs 2006: 6). In other words, they suggest that a contact zone represents a shared space in which various stakeholders seek to translate their institutional preferences into policy prescriptions and ultimately, policy outputs and outcomes.

Actors in the political space constituted by a contact zone utilise different forms of capital in order to advance their own preferences within a

shared system.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, '[i]n the 'contact zone' encounters are rarely, or rarely *only*, about words and their meaning but are almost always, more or less explicitly, about claims-making, opportunities, strategic choices and goals, interests and resource maximisation...' (*original emphasis* Lendvai and Stubbs 2007: 16).<sup>3</sup> By drawing on institutional resources which include various types of capital (e.g. economic, political, social), participants compete to shape the language and prescriptions for policies to reflect their own interests and agenda. The process of channelling their institutional agenda through a universally appealing framework affords these participants a symbolic mark of legitimacy that serves to authenticate the institutional or political motives underpinning the proposed measures. This is process of legitimation is therefore translational and produces a mediating effect whereby 'some kinds of association or translation are legitimated and authorised just as others are excluded or denied' (Freeman 2009: 435).

Applying these concepts to a meso-level analysis of policing reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina complements existing structural critiques of the relationship between liberal state-building and police reforms in weak and structurally dependent societies (eg. Ellison and Pino 2012; Ryan 2011). Contact zones offer a valuable framework for analysing the politicised character of relationships between security nodes while the nodular approach advocated by Johnston and Shearing (2003) allows us to analyse these 'spaces' as part of a wider networks of governance. In the section which follows, a brief review of the literatures on global policing and externally-driven police reforms in BiH contextualise my case study and elaborate on the value of drawing on the concepts of policy translation and contact zones to produce an empirically-grounded account of the nuanced power relations that generate security governance in this transitional, post-conflict society.

### **Liberal state-building and policing reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Structural and post-structural analyses of the relationship between state-building, security governance and policing reform processes typically reflect elements of Duffield's (1999; 2007) critique of the relationship between development and security in the aftermath of the Cold War which suggests that the primary driver for development aid, humanitarian interventions, and liberal state-building initiatives since the early 1990s is a broadened, liberal

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<sup>3</sup> Here Lendvai and Stubbs (2007: 5) draw explicitly on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Loiq Wacquant (1992).

definition of security that emphasises the 'biopolitical' threat of underdevelopment as a proxy for conflict. Empirical critiques of policing reforms and the actors that pursue them in the context of weak and structurally dependent societies suggest that their prescriptions generally reflect the interests of powerful international actors who use their influence and capital to generate alignment and convergence (Bowling 2010; Bowling and Sheptycki 2012; Ryan 2011).<sup>4</sup> With reference to the prescriptive normative literature on 'democratic policing' (Bayley 2006; Jones et al. 1996; Stone 2000), the evident implication of these critiques is that the policing practices and structures generated by foreign assistance programmes lack clear channels of democratic accountability and responsiveness to the interests of domestic stakeholders (Aitchison and Blaustein 2012; Marenin 2000; Ellison and Pino 2012).

Building on this observed lack of local ownership and participation in policing reform projects that affect developing, transitional and post-conflict societies, these critiques have also generated practical concerns about the sustainability of the outputs that these prescriptions for policing reform generate (see Pino and Wiatrowski 2006). This is particularly evident in relation to research that documents the gap between community policing rhetoric and practices in developing and transitional countries around the world (Brogden 1999; see also Brogden and Nijhar 2005). Brogden's work suggests that reformers involved with community policing reforms in these contexts are prone to overestimating the transferability of these policies and often fail to consult with local stakeholders with respect to questions of design and implementation with the implication that the outputs that they generate are often underwhelming and in some cases, undesirable (Ruteree and Pommerolle 2003).

With reference to the ongoing police reform process in BiH, a prototypical example of liberal state-building (see Chandler 1999), the question of local ownership (or lack thereof)<sup>5</sup> and concerns about the outputs generated by policing reforms have been primarily voiced with reference to the activities of international interests represented by the Office for the High Representative (OHR) and the European Union Police Mission (EUPM).<sup>6</sup> For example, Collantes Celador (2007, 2009) questions the suitability of

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<sup>4</sup> Some other examples include Albrecht and Buur (2009), Leeds (2007) and Sedra (2007),

<sup>5</sup> The issue of local ownership has been a recurring theme in the wider literature on liberal statebuilding and governance in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see Belloni 2001; Caplan 2005; Pugh 2002)

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of criminal justice transformations in Bosnia-Herzegovina including the police reforms between 1995 and 2005, see Aitchison (2011). Collantes Celador (2007, 2009) provides a detailed account of the activities of the EUPM.

'European police standards/practices' in relation to the complex and fragmented political landscape of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the politicisation of the police reform process itself in relation to an EU-centred agenda that prioritises harmonisation and alignment over developing local ownership and sustainability. Similarly, Juncos (2011) criticises the coercive tactics utilised by the OHR in attempting to promote its Europeanization agenda during attempts at police restructuring. Aitchison (2011: 81-105) also voices concerns about the extent to which international policing reformers in Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to focus on state security apparatuses despite the apparent limitations of this approach due to the institutional deficiencies of the police in this context.<sup>7</sup>

The philosophy of community policing was first introduced to Bosnia-Herzegovina by the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) with support from the US International Criminal Investigative Assistance Program (ICITAP) during the late 1990s. The EUPM would subsequently initiate some community policing projects between 2003 and 2005, much of which were oriented towards improving local security for 'returnee' populations as well as improving the general public's trust in the police (Collantes Celador 2007: 16). Since the mid-2000's, the EUPM has substantially trimmed its involvement with low visibility aspects of the policing reform process such as community policing (see Collantes Celador 2009: 240). Accordingly, since 2005 seemingly all of the major projects relating to the local governance or delivery of policing have been initiated by a handful of bi-lateral and multi-lateral development agencies including the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the Sarajevo-based Centre for Security Studies (CSS) in partnership with the London-based Saferworld Group, and

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<sup>7</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina's political landscape was prescribed by the Dayton Peace Agreement which established the country as an international (later European Union) protectorate in January 1996. Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina has a weak central government, two entity-level governments and the Brčko District. One entity, Republika Srpska, features a centralised policing system while in the other entity, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, policing is divided across ten cantons, each with its own Ministry of Interior Affairs. There is also a state-level policing agency (State Investigation and Protection Agency) and the BiH Border Police. The Dayton Peace Agreement also established the Office of the High Representative 'the final authority in theatre regarding interpretation of this Agreement on the civilian implementation of the peace settlement' (United Nations Security Council 2010). Further information about the complex political and policing architecture of Bosnia-Herzegovina can be found in Aitchison (2011: 44-60).



most recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>8</sup> Much of their work has focused on introducing specific models of 'community policing' and 'community safety partnership' projects (including 'Safer Communities') at various sites throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to improve the accountability and responsiveness of local security providers, including the police and other municipal officials, to their respective communities.

Advocating a mix of meso- and micro-level reforms, these initiatives reflect a human security narrative that presents community policing and community safety partnerships as complementary elements of a 'holistic' localised strategy for generating meaningful improvements in policing and security.<sup>9</sup> The work of these agencies is documented within the existing literature on policing reforms in BiH<sup>10</sup> however analysing one of these projects as a contact zone promises to illuminate the 'micro-politics' (Van de Spuy 2000) which shapes its contours and prescriptions. In other words, this analytical approach promises generate detailed descriptions of what it is that compels multi-lateral development agencies like the UNDP to translate vague and ubiquitous concepts like 'Safer Communities' into conceptual and programmatic prescriptions for security governance. This highlights an important gap in the literature on policing reforms in BiH and other weak and structurally dependent societies, one with substantial implications for our understanding of the nodal cartography of security governance in these contexts.

### **Safer Communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

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<sup>8</sup> The important role of bi-lateral and multi-lateral development agencies in driving important aspects of the policing reform process in Bosnia-Herzegovina is consistent with the role of foreign policing assistance programmes in driving such reforms in other 'transitional' societies (Marenin 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Examples of this narrative can be found in a 2007 UNDP Albania report which reviews activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina (DeBlieck 2007). I elaborate on this posited relationship between community policing and community safety partnerships later in this article.

<sup>10</sup> These descriptive accounts focus on the role that the US International Criminal Investigative Assistance Program (ICITAP) played in contributing to the development of early training courses on community policing (Vejnovic and Lalic 2005) and later DFID's role in developing the 2007 national 'Strategy for Community-based Policing in Bosnia-Herzegovina' (Collantes Celador 2007, 2009). Also, Deljkic and Lučić-Čatić (2011) provide an empirical evaluation of community policing practices in Sarajevo that reviews the work DFID and the SDC in managing pilot projects however their analysis primarily focuses on the question of effectiveness.

Policies associated with community safety partnerships including 'Safer Communities' and 'Safer Cities' have proliferated globally over the past two decades. As an increasingly prominent feature of plural policing and crime control strategies in advanced 'Western' societies, their touted successes and their purported contribution to generating more accessible and responsive models for local security governance have rendered these policies attractive templates for reformers involved with policing issues in developing, transitional and post-conflict societies. Their global dissemination through transnational policy communities, policy entrepreneurs and international development agencies and non-governmental organisations since the mid-1990s suggests that significant cross-national (and even intrastate) variation exists with regards to the conceptual and programmatic features of these 'partnerships' (Crawford 2009). The hybrid nature of community safety partnerships in developing, transitional and post-conflict societies is particularly evident as they are transplanted in these contexts meaning that their contours are adapted to fit local circumstances and structures (Dupont et al 2003: 341).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, community safety partnerships were introduced between 2003 and 2006 by the UK's Department for International Development (DFiD) and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) which established citizen security forums (CSF)<sup>11</sup> to complement their community policing projects. The logic was that community policing would serve to improve the public's willingness to engage with the police while establishing local security forums (henceforth 'citizen security forums' or 'CSF') would generate greater cooperation between the police and their counterparts amongst other local public service providers thereby improving the capacity of these officers to address community problems through partnership (Atos KPMG 2003: 3-4). While the SDC concluded its involvement with community safety reforms after the national *Strategy for Community-based Policing in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Security 2007) was published in 2007, DFID continued to provide support for the CSFs that it piloted in Prijedor and Žepče until 2010. Beginning in 2006, the Sarajevo-based Centre for Security Studies (CSS) in cooperation with the UK-based Saferworld Group was also involved with piloting various community safety partnership projects locally throughout BiH. By April 2010, both the Saferworld Group and the CSS had decided to discontinue the project however a consensus remained amongst many of the individuals and organisations involved with policing reforms in

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<sup>11</sup> Also known as 'community safety forums'.

BiH that 'community safety partnerships' were needed throughout the country in order to sustain the progress made with community policing and to develop locally accountable sites of security governance (Field notes, 26 April 2010).

**\*UNDP → ((Safer Communities)) ←CSFs\***

The goal of improving cooperation between the police and other municipal service providers with a role to play in community safety and local security governance served as the working narrative for the Safer Communities project during its pilot phase which officially commenced in early 2009. The project's initial aims included supporting five previously established 'citizen security forums' (CSF) in Bratunac, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Visegrád and Zenica while drawing on their diverse experiences to develop a strategic framework that would allow the SCP team to support the project's expansion throughout BiH with financial support (i.e. non-core funding) from European donors (Interview, 'Project Manager', 26 April 2010; UNDP 2010). With reference to the work of Johnston and Shearing (2003), it is evident that UNDP aspired to develop a parallel architecture for nodal security governance in BiH, one that could enhance existing state structures and institutions by improving the links between different agencies and security actors and rendering their governance more accessible and responsive to the needs and interests of local security consumers (UNDP 2009a).

It is evident that during the pilot phase, each CSF would constitute an important security node. UNDP would also serve as an important security node in this emerging network as this organisation served as the institutional sponsor for Safer Communities and provided this project with seed funding that allowed the Safer Communities project team to provide financial and technical support to these forums. With this seed funding, it was also evident that Safer Communities emerged as an important contact zone in this emerging network as it actively linked these CSFs to other security nodes including multinational institutions like UNDP and later the European Commission.<sup>12</sup> The remainder of this subsection introduces the micro-politics

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<sup>12</sup> Consider that the SCP also constituted a security node given the project's role in initially coordinating (or governing) the work of local CSFs. This implies that certain security nodes take on characteristics of a contact zone in cases where their designated function and nodal positioning compels them to participate in the 'governance of governance', that is 'governing the range of nodes and nodal assemblages that now function to produce security goods across local, national and international levels' (Wood and Shearing 2007: 115).

of the SCP as a contact zone by reviewing its methodology for selecting these pilot municipalities and for identifying relevant project activities to implement through their forums. This analysis concludes that the SCP team's mentality was consistent with UNDP's 'local capacity development' mandate with the implication that domestic stakeholders, specifically local political elites involved with these CSFs, were encouraged to take ownership over their respective nodes and to use them to govern security in a locally responsive manner. I

UNDP's Safer Communities project was originally established as a component of the Programme's Small Arms Control and Reduction project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SACBiH). However, the SACBiH team was unable to initiate the Safer Communities component because it lacked the funding and thus the personnel to do so. In late 2009, the team secured seed funding and between April and June 2010, the team's Project Manager and Community Policing Advisor (henceforth 'CP Advisor') conducted a series of meetings with various stakeholders throughout BiH that were previously or currently involved with different aspects of community policing and community safety partnership reform projects. Upon completing this research, UNDP published a 'Baseline Assessment' report which reviewed the team's pilot selection methodology and also presented evidence in support of the project. With reference to the selection methodology, the report suggests that team developed a set of criteria that would determine whether individual municipalities qualified for pilot status. The most essential positive selection factor was that a given municipality already had an established and functional CSF (UNDP 2010: 11).

Another consideration that factored heavily into the team's selection process was motivation (Interview, 'Project Manager' and 'CP Advisor', 26 April 2010). Essentially, the newly formed SCP team was only keen to invest its limited resources into supporting CSF's that would be cooperative and receptive to UNDP's offer of assistance. This was due to the limited timeframe for the pilot phase of the project and the need for the SCP to demonstrate results in order to attract future investment and ultimately expand the project. The team's emphasis on 'motivation' as informal criteria for selecting pilot candidates suggests that it was keen to promote partnership and cooperation as symbolic values to define its working methodology. This was perhaps unsurprising given that this mentality was consistent with what the team identified as the institutional mandate of UNDP: local capacity development (Personal field notes, 21-22 February 2011).

From the perspective of the SCP team, UNDP's capacity development ethos enabled its members to distinguish their 'progressive' approach from

what it perceived to be the 'top-down' and 'coercive' methods utilised in the past by other international organisations involved with policing reforms in BiH. For example, the Project Manager would frequently comment that the SCP was not about forcing a specific model or structure upon these local actors. Rather, the idea was that UNDP would provide technical and financial support to CSFs and invest in project activities that reflected the local security needs of their respective communities. It was believed that this initial investment would help to promote the work of these CSFs, both locally and throughout BiH thereby generating 'grass roots' demand for additional CSFs to be established in other municipalities throughout the country. Locally, it was also projected that the carrot of financial investment to support project activities would encourage participation and cooperation between different municipal agencies and political elites keen to access this source of economic capital (Personal interview, 'Project Manager', 26 April 2010). Based on this description, it is clear that the team's understanding of Safer Communities as a template for pursuing local capacity development was influenced by an important institutional narrative long associated with UNDP in its role as a development organisation (Murphy 2006).<sup>13</sup>

Once the five pilot sites had been selected, it was also evident that the implementation methodology of the 'Safer Communities' team during its pilot phase would generally reflect the capacity development mandate. This was evident from the range of project activities that UNDP supported through these forums in 2011 and its rationale for doing so. To identify public safety and security issues of relevance to local communities throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, the team commissioned a public perceptions survey in late 2010 which revealed that the number one source of insecurity for many Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) communities involved the country's stray dog population. For Bosnian Serb communities, the predominant issue seemed to involve road traffic while in Bosnian Croat communities, there appeared to be higher levels of concern about the availability of narcotics (UNDP, 'internal document', 2010).<sup>14</sup>

Initially, these findings came as a surprise to the Safer Communities team because they appeared to contradict the project's justification by suggesting that the levels of victimisation and the public's fear of crime were actually rather low in Bosnia-Herzegovina. From UNDP's perspective, this positive assessment of the country's local security situation was also a

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<sup>13</sup> Browne (2011) provides a detailed discussion of UNDP's dual roles as both a development organisation and a development network.

<sup>14</sup> These are now largely spatially distinct communities which suggests a shift away from the more integrated pre-war landscape.

source of concern because it raised further questions about whether the team would eventually be able to convey the importance of the project to potential donors and thus pursue its projected expansion given that the pilot phase was scheduled to expire at the end of 2011 (Personal communication, Sarajevo, 17 January 2011).<sup>15</sup> Despite its concerns about the appeal of focusing on such low profile activities, the Safer Communities team met with the different CSF's and presented these findings in order to determine the project activities that their local 'partners' wished to pursue. For example, the Safer Communities team would go on to support Zenica's CSF in designing and constructing a shelter for stray dogs and later Bratunac's CSF in developing architectural designs for an upgrade of its youth sport facilities. In the months that followed, the team also worked with CSFs to introduce CCTV technology and to ensure that its use and applications were consistent with a charter for the 'democratic use' of this technology published by the European Forum for Urban Security (Personal communication, 'Safer Communities team', 13 December 2011).

The SCP's decision to support these project activities illustrates UNDP's significant influence over the power politics of this setting as this seed funding dictated the managerial and accountability structures for the project. This economic capital therefore afforded the SCP team a significant degree of autonomy in terms of how it conceptualised the project and defined its projected outputs meaning that the SCP team was encouraged to support project activities that reflected the local security needs of BiH citizens. In this respect, the projected outputs for the pilot phase of Safer Communities were largely intangible and intentionally vague. For example, while the SCP was formally established through the SACBiH project document (UNDP 2009a), the posited value of community policing and community safety partnerships as strategies for reducing personal ownership of illegal small arms played no discernable role in determining the types of activities that the team would pursue through these CSFs. In fact, not once was the issue of small arms reduction breached at any of the meetings that I attended between representatives of the SCP and the pilot CSFs. On a rhetorical level, it was also evident that the Project Manager would only publicly acknowledge the link between small-arms control and Safer Communities when discussing the project with certain audiences that had a limited role to play in shaping the actual implementation of the project (Field notes, January–March 2011).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The pilot phase would subsequently be extended until mid-2012 as the team continued to pursue additional funding streams.

<sup>16</sup> One example of this was at a quarterly Project Board meeting for the SACBiH project in February 2011. During the meeting, the Project Manager spent the majority of her/his

In this case, UNDP's economic capital also translated into social capital. UNDP's seed funding meant that Safer Communities would be designed, managed and implemented by UNDP employees. While each member of the SCP team was classified as 'local staff' meaning that they were BiH citizens on temporary contracts with UNDP, these individuals believed in the organisational ethos of capacity development and this was evident through their work. Furthermore, the lack of conditionality attached to this seed funding meant that senior managers in the UNDP BiH country office were not overly concerned with the SCP team's 'performance' or 'results' but rather their ability to use the project to attract non-core investment. This meant there was no immediate need for the team to pre-define its policy prescriptions during the pilot phase. Most importantly, this stream of economic capital meant that domestic stakeholders in BiH, specifically members of the pilot CSFs, were afforded opportunities to shape the contours of the project by defining relevant project activities and altering the structure of these forums to accommodate the diverse political and contextual features of their respective communities. The flexible and indeterminate character of this project was therefore considered to be an important asset by the SCP team given its desire to generate outputs that would help to improve the governing capacities of local political elites and practitioners throughout BiH. To this effect, one member of the team suggested that the SCP represented a 'perfect metaphor for the work of UNDP' because 'it can be used to do anything but it is difficult to define' (Personal communication, 'Safer Communities team', 17 February 2011).<sup>17</sup>

***\*European Commission → ((Safer Communities)) → CSFs\****

Elaborating on the perceived need for the Safer Communities project to eventually appeal to the interests of the European Commission as a prospective investor highlights some important issues about the (un-)democratic character of this contact zone and its responsiveness to hierarchical pressures for structural alignment. While the ambiguity surrounding the conceptual and programmatic contours of Safer Communities was viewed by the SCP team and UNDP as an asset insofar

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presentation reviewing the SACBiH team's progress with regards to various targets for munitions destruction and made only a brief reference to the 'Safer Communities' component by stating that it was 'linked with weapons collection activities' (Personal field notes, 04 February 2011).

<sup>17</sup> This description is consistent with Browne's (2011) analysis of the weak and ill-defined mandate of UNDP.

as it allowed the project to focus on capacity development, it was also evident that the lack of clarity regarding what the Safer Communities was meant to achieve in BiH would be problematic down the line because it would not appeal to prospective donors interested in projects that promised to deliver tangible benefits and outputs (Personal communication, 'Project Manager', 17 January 2011). As a project dealing with security sector reform in the Western Balkans, it was also believed that the European Commission represented the only remaining source potential investment as most alternative sources of bi-lateral assistance had dried up by this point. Confronted with a need to attract a new source of revenue to sustain the SCP beyond 2011, a significant portion of my time in this contact zone was spent working with colleagues to negotiate and translate the conceptual and programmatic contours of Safer Communities into language that would resonate with the European Commission.

Articulating a new identity for the project proved to be challenging because none of the team members (including myself) possessed a concrete understanding how the process of attracting non-core investment from donors actually worked. Furthermore, there was also confusion about what kind of policing reform projects the European Commission would be keen to invest in. One restriction we faced was that the three permanent members of the Safer Communities team were BiH citizens and lacked first-hand experience and knowledge of the higher echelons of the UN development system and the international community's network of governance in BiH.<sup>18</sup> As junior staff in the UNDP BiH country office, the team's CP Advisor and Project Associate lacked the social capital necessary for directly acquiring this information from senior UNDP managers who understood the 'donor game'. While the Project Manager (also a BiH citizen) did possess this social capital, this individual was frequently preoccupied with addressing various obstacles that had arisen with the SACBiH project meaning that the CP Advisor, the Project Associate, and I were left to explore these questions through regular brainstorming sessions that generated various concept notes and prescriptions for transforming the project. These concept notes would ultimately play only a limited role in determining how the SCP would actually proceed. Nonetheless, reviewing our attempts to recast or translate the SCP into language consistent with what we perceived to be the interests of the

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<sup>18</sup> As a non-BiH citizen, I would have been considered 'international staff' had I been salaried during this internship. This implies that I initially lacked intimate knowledge of the key structures and processes involved with governance in this context and more importantly, the social capital to acquire this knowledge without introductions provided by the Project Manager.



European Commission as a prospective investor confirms an important and structurally coercive dimension to the relationship between liberal state-building, nodal security governance and policing reforms in BiH.

Our deliberations proceeded on the basis of imperfect information about what the European Commission would be interested in funding. This information was supplied by the Project Manager who suggested that we would need to identify a 'selling point' for Safer Communities that would readily answer the question of what these forums actually do. During one conversation that I had with the Project Manager, it was noted that Safer Communities projects in other transitional countries were linked with specific, topical issues designed to attract investment (Personal communication, 'Project Manager', 17 February 2011). In Kenya, for example, a 'Safer Cities' project had been implemented by UN-HABITAT which focused on the issue of developing safer housing. In Croatia, the UNDP 'Safer Communities' project stipulated that 20% of the project's budget must be spent on gender related activities. By citing these previous examples, the Project Manager effectively suggested that the SCP in BiH would only appeal to donors if it was marketed as a strategy for achieving a clearly defined goal as opposed to marketing it as a template for improving security governance locally. In fact, the Project Manager went so far as to suggest that the European Commission would not view capacity development or the creation of new structures or nodes as 'results' in their own right. Rather, the Project Manager suggested that European-based donors were attracted to projects with tangible outputs; projects that could be measured and evaluated (Ibid.).

This mentality underpinned our search for a 'greater selling point' and our efforts to demonstrate that the SCP could be aligned with what we identified as the European Commission's agenda for Europeanization in BiH. One of the early concept notes that we produced indicated that CSF's might provide a useful strategy for combatting rising levels of social exclusion in Bosnia-Herzegovina, an issue which was previously identified as being significant by a 2009 UNDP Human Development Report for Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNDP, 2009b). The possibility of linking this framework to the issue of refugees and returnees was also briefly discussed, albeit promptly dismissed once the Project Manager was informed by a senior UNDP manager based at the BiH country office that this was no longer an appealing issue for European donors (Personal communication, 'Project Manager', 14 March 2011).

The idea that the CSF's could be marketed in relation to their projected contributions to reductions in local rates of crime and victimisation was also readily dismissed for methodological reasons. For one thing, the only available sources of baseline data describing levels of crime or

victimisation and public perceptions of important institutions like the police came from police statistics or independently commissioned public perceptions surveys presenting inconsistent and at times questionable methodologies. Given the findings of the Safer Communities project's own public perceptions survey, there was also a concern that the national expansion of Safer Communities might actually generate an initial increase in reported crime. This speculation was based on the belief that functional CSF's would ideally generate greater awareness of public security issues within their respective communities and thereby encourage the public to become more proactive in reporting incidents to CSF members including the police. It was believed that the long term sustainability of the outputs generated by the Safer Communities project would be determined by the capacity of CSF members to address these heightened expectations of local public security provision. Thus, while the team was cautiously optimistic that these nodes would contribute to important, tangible improvements in the local governance of security if given the time to do so, it also recognised that the prospect of measuring and conveying their success in the short-term to donors was extremely problematic (Field notes, 14 February 2011).

Having dismissed the possibility of branding Safer Communities as strategy for addressing crime or public perceptions of insecurity, our focus temporarily shifted to the prospect of aligning these projected outputs with the EU's wider security interests in the region. After reviewing the language of what we deemed to be important accession documents including the Copenhagen Criteria 'that a candidate country must have achieved' before it can become a member of the European Union (European Commission 2011) and Bosnia-Herzegovina's 'Stabilisation and Association Agreement'<sup>19</sup>, it was determined that the prospect of adapting the project to address the EU's high profile security interests such as combatting organised crime and border security were rather limited. In this case, there was an intrinsic realisation amongst the team members that the Safer Communities concept would not have a direct impact on these issues, and more importantly, that it would be impossible to market this project impact to donors. While this deliberation process ultimately failed to provide us with a viable selling point, it did serve to prompt an important dialogue amongst the members of the SCP team which produced a consensus that the conceptual and programmatic contours of this project must continue to be oriented towards improving nodal

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<sup>19</sup> As of March 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a potential candidate country for EU accession as it has not ratified its 'Stabilisation and Association Agreement' (SAA) which it signed back in June 2008. The SAA outlines the obligations that BiH must fulfil before it can be considered a candidate for EU membership.

governance rather than increasing security (Personal communication, 'Safer Communities team', 25 March 2011).

By April 2011, it was apparent that our concerted efforts to rebrand Safer Communities amounted to a significant distraction from the development and implementation of its actual project activities which had fallen behind schedule. The substantial time that was spent negotiating the conceptual aspects of the project and speculating about the interests of potential donors detracted from the attention which might have otherwise been devoted to actually managing relationships with CSF partners and even expanding the project through the project's existing budgetary resources. This observation is informative insofar as it denotes a significant shift in the power politics of Safer Communities as a contact zone. This shift was indicative of the underlying power structures that have driven liberal state-building initiatives in this context since 1996 (e.g. Chandler 1999).

Whereas the implementation methodology that defined the SCP team's mentality during the pilot stage compelled it to enhance the capacities of local public service providers to address the needs of their respective communities, the impending need to secure additional funding to sustain the project served to highlight the project's susceptibility to the underlying power politics of nodal security governance in BiH as evident from these pressures for alignment. This power shift was significant because it signalled that the preferences of domestic stakeholders including political elites, practitioners and the general public would ultimately have limited bearing on any decisions relating to the future of this project if it was defined in relation to European interests. This was due to the fact that CSF members including democratically elected political elites, bureaucrats and senior practitioners in BiH were restricted from accessing this important contact zone because they lacked the economic or social capital to do so.

The single observation which is most indicative of this assessment is that at no point during this three-month period did the Safer Communities team invite any BiH political elites to participate in this deliberation process. Rather, these local actors were structurally excluded from this translational process because they were unaware that it was taking place and they lacked an invitation from UNDP to participate. The inaccessibility of this contact zone is illustrated by the fact that its deliberative boundaries overlapped with the physical boundaries of the Safer Communities office which was located in UNDP's BiH headquarters and featured a secure entry system and a strict visitor protocol.

Illustrating the exclusion of these individuals is not to suggest that the Safer Communities team consciously or intentionally restricted these individuals from participating in this process. Rather, it was simply the

team's assumption that CSF members and other government officials had little interest in participating in this translational process and that in all probability they had nothing to contribute to this task. This analysis is consistent with Maglajlić and Rašidagić's (2007: 156) observation that 'Bosnian social-sector professionals [find] themselves both unable to communicate with international aid agencies and incapable of adopting the style of work these agencies brought with them.' Rather, Maglajlić and Rašidagić (2007: 156) suggest that 'local staff' of international organisations like UNDP are the individuals who take on this function of policy translators or mediators and therefore have important role to play in linking transnational policy networks to local actors, institutions and governmental structures.

### ***Salvaging ((Safer Communities))***

While the pressures for the SCP team to align this project with the interests of prospective donors presents a fatalistic assessment of the underlying structures of nodal security governance in BiH, recent developments since March 2011 indicate that the SCP team has potentially identified an alternative solution to this funding dilemma that promises to reaffirm its link to UNDP and allow it to govern the governance of security in accordance with its capacity development mandate. This solution is explainable from UNDP's proximity to the SCP and this institution's advocacy of managerial creativity as a means of achieving capacity development objectives amidst these financial pressures (Murphy 2006: 348). Creative problem solving in this instance was made possible by the fact that the UN development system continues to offer limited pockets of core funding which allows projects like SCP that are not particularly resource intensive to remain independent of non-core investment if they can be linked with designated funding areas (Brown 2011: 119). In March 2011 the SCP team concluded that in order for the project to have a meaningful impact on the local governance of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina and for the CSF's to be rendered locally accountable and sustainable the conceptual and programmatic prescriptions of this project would need to remain flexible. In other words, the 'governance of governance' (Wood and Shearing 2007) would need to be responsive to the diverse needs and expectations of the CSF partners rather than the rigid, subjective interests of supranational benefactors. Accordingly, the team determined that establishing and supporting the development of new municipal level CSF's throughout BiH would necessarily serve as the project's primary focus and projected output (Field notes, 25 March 2011).

This realisation seemingly negated the possibility of attracting investment from the European Commission and following a series of

meetings between the Safer Communities Project Manager and a senior UNDP manager based in the BiH country office who possessed significant contacts, experience and knowledge of the UN development system, the SCP developed a creative proposal to pursue the expansion of the Safer Communities project as a component of the UN's Armed Conflict and Violence Prevention Programme (Personal communications, 14 March 2011 and 12 April 2011). This would enable the team to access additional core funding from UNDP's Crisis Prevention and Recovery budget and to work alongside other UN development agencies like UN Population Fund to develop a range of project activities that could be marketed to and implemented through the CSFs. The idea was that CSF's would still be afforded the opportunity to choose which project activities they wished to pursue while the Safer Communities team could provide technical and administrative support for these forums and draw upon its position in the network to connect these forums directly to appropriate donors (Personal communications, 'Safer Communities team', 13 December 2011 and 16 February 2012). The benefit of this proposed solution (with reference to UNDP's capacity development mandate) was that it promised to reduce the pressures for the SCP team to manage the project on the basis of anticipated 'results'. It also suggests that the project's contours will be defined, at least in part, by CSF members and other BiH political elites rather than supranational benefactors like the European Commission by proxy.

As of June 2012, both the outcome of this proposal and the future of the Safer Communities project in Bosnia-Herzegovina remain uncertain. Even if the proposal is successful, changes in project personnel and the emergence of new security nodes (through prospective collaborations with UN agencies) may generate new pressures in this contact zone. It is also worth considering that the prospect of the SCP ultimately generating and sustaining local ownership of these CSFs is also questionable given domestic funding constraints and the lack of a domestic institution or actor which can provide these CSFs with continuous administrative support and a sense of interconnectedness once the SCP expires. After UNDP withdraws its support for the project, the SCP team anticipates that CSFs will actively seek out new sources of funding; a prospect which promises to generate new contact zones between these CSFs and new stakeholders which might lack an intrinsic appreciation for capacity building work (Field notes, 8-10 February 2011).

Important questions also exist about how the governance generated by these forums can be rendered publicly accountable and transparent. The documented presence of extensive political corruption in BiH (e.g. Divjak and Pugh 2008) and the enduring role of informal political networks as important

sources of power and social capital in BiH (UNDP 2009b) poses an important question about the democratic character of the security outcomes that these CSFs may ultimately generate.<sup>20</sup> This echoes Johnston and Shearing's (2003: 148) observation that local capacity building may potentially serve to advance the interests of the already powerful instead of the disempowered and that any outputs designed to empower local actors must therefore be rendered accountable to the public's interest. The task of developing a functional accountability mechanism to oversee the activities of these CSFs once UNDP has withdrawn its support for the SCP will therefore serve as the key determinant of whether the security outcomes generated by these nodes will ultimately contribute to an improvement in the governance of security in BiH.

## Conclusions

The prospect of securing additional non-core funding for the Safer Communities Project served to passively introduce a powerful new supranational stakeholder into this contact zone. The significant economic capital possessed by the European Commission enabled it to play an influential albeit indirect role in temporarily shaping the conceptual and programmatic contours of the project through a series of deliberations and negotiations that were conducted by the SCP team. This analysis is suggestive of a process of structural alignment and provides empirical illustration that supports the arguments of an established literature on liberal state-building and policing reform, particularly its discussion of the role that major international actors and donors play in generating structural alignment from a distance (Browne 2006; Duffield 2007).

Aspects of this analysis appear rather fatalistic. Notably, the implication that projects like Safer Communities are structurally predisposed to the interests of external benefactors and stakeholders echoes concerns expressed by Bowling and Sheptycki (2012) regarding the legitimacy of global and transnational forms of policing while the sociological character of these pressures for alignment echoes Ryan's (2011) Foucaultian analysis of policing reforms as a form of liberal governmentality. While these critiques do not preclude the prospect that domestic stakeholders may ultimately benefit

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<sup>20</sup> Broader concerns about the politics of community safety partnerships and their exclusionary potential are well in research on this model in Western European contexts (eg. Crawford 1998).

from the outputs generated by these policing reforms, they suggest that the governmental process is itself problematic due to its inaccessibility and lack of responsiveness to local interests. The example of Safer Communities highlights the fact that the power politics which underpin the work of multi-lateral international development organisations in weak and structurally dependent societies like BiH is inevitably skewed towards supranational rather than domestic interests and this implies that the nodal cartography for security governance in these contexts is suggestive of a characterised by a democratic deficit with significant implications for the prospect of ultimately establishing locally accountable and democratically responsive security nodes (Johnston and Shearing 2003) that can independently govern security as a 'public good' (Loader and Walker 2003).

While this case study supports this fatalistic analysis, it also presents a nuanced account of the relationship between liberal state-building and policing reforms, one which highlights the added benefit of exploring these power relations through a nodular framework. As Johnston and Shearing (*original emphasis* 2003: 146) suggest, governance cannot be reduced to 'the mere power of one agent *over* another' but rather it exists as 'a varying relationship *between* agents'. A key implication of this nuanced analysis is therefore that security governance in weak and structurally dependent societies like BiH cannot simply be accounted for in hierarchical terms and so the presence of asymmetrical power structures, self-interested donors, and the myopic prescriptions of policy entrepreneurs need not translate into undemocratic policing outcomes (Ibid.: 147). Deconstructing the power politics that shaped Safer Communities as 'the space between' local CSFs in Bosnia-Herzegovina and supranational stakeholders highlights the dynamic character of governance within this nodal cartography and the value of using the concepts of 'contact zones' and 'policy translation' to shed light upon the ways that seemingly disempowered actors and institutions to capitalise on their unique positioning in networks of governance to assert their preferences upon the contours of emergent contact zones like Safer Communities (Wood and Shearing 2007: 98).

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